

Was Horseman's shot a goal?

A POINT GOES BEGGING AT LOWER MEAD

Wealdstone 0, Wycombe Wanderers 0

NOT BY ANY MEANS for the first time this season, Wycombe Wanderers grudgingly had to settle for a mere point when their unquestioned superiority begged for two.

Unhappily, it was an all too familiar tale at Lower Mead on Tuesday evening. So often Wanderers' solid defence and slick, industrious midfield work have earned them victory, only for things to go wrong upfront, where it counts most.

But never was the frustration as great. With little positive strength and less spirit Wealdstone needed to sit back and pray for anything other than a hiding.

ANSWERED

Yet a few days after they had "got away with it" in a goalless draw at Sutton, they're prayers were answered again.

The Stones' almost lost grip of their draw near to time, when the stadium was thrown into confusion by a dramatic incident following yet another Wycombe raid.

Tony Horseman, the late match winner in the Amateur cup match between the clubs, tried an overhead kick which hit the bar and bounced down somewhere either inside or outside the goalline.

It looked like Smith handled the ball away, although it might have been more legally Andy

Williams. Whatever, after consultations with his linesman, referee Mr. D. F. Pond (Chelmsford) astonished all by awarding, of all things, "drop-ball", and thus compromising between the four possibilities — goal, no-goal, penalty, or fair save.

Wycombe, with John Maskell recovered from 'flu, were at 100 per cent strength, and always looked on the verge of a "hat-ful".

NO REVENGE

Certainly revenge for their Amateur Cup exit seemed an unlikely possibility for the Stones, whose two stand out performers, 'keeper Williams and young full-back Gary Hand, maintained at least some polish to an otherwise mundane side.

However, somewhere along the line, Wanderers' attack forgot their job, and Williams was never the busy bee he should have had to be.

Before an official 1,200 gate, Keith Searle and Johnny Hutchinson returned to former hunting grounds in style, though.

"Hutch", especially sharp and working extra hard, needed quite some watching. More, in fact, than late inclusion at right-back, Bob Williams could manage.

And Keith, less inhibited thanks to Wycombe's recent goal spree, emerged more in the second half as a threat down the middle.

CURTAILED

His role was curtailed, however, by the strapping six foot centre-half, Mike Smith, whose style of tackling earned

him a chat-a-half with the referee.

After a 4th minute swerving shot by Dave Bullock, had briefly brought Maskell into play for the first time, Wanderers' dominance became obvious.

Andy Williams fell to Geoff Anthony's feet to stop a goal chance in the next minute, and, in the 16th minute Hutchinson forced the save of the night from the Stones' 'keeper, after following up a dazzling run through with a long drive, which was diverted over the bar for a corner.

Burly Ian Rundle almost bundled the ball over the line, but Hand calmly kicked it away to the comparative safety of a second corner.

Despite Wycombe's search for maximum championship points, not until the 40th minute did they again, fully test Williams via a hard low and accurate drive by Hutchinson through a ruck of players.

FOOLHARDY

Smith's extended and foolhardy backpass, three minutes later only just found Williams before Searle could chase onto it, and both Horseman and John Delaney tried their luck before the interval whistle.

Searle proved a growing menace to the Stones' and quickly gave Smith a chance to make amends, when five minutes into the new half, only the centre half's quick action stopped Keith's clear run to goal.

Frustration was not Wycombe's alone. Their fans screamed constantly for substitute Bernie Bremer to replace John Draper — a move player-manager Howard Moxon finally sanctioned with 14 minutes to play

Indeed to bring on Keith Blunt themselves might have given the visitors that extra push to victory. It has before, but the idea was never tried and time run out on them.

Not, however, before Wealdstone came through unscratched from two tricky moments.

The first, eight minutes from time, involved a low, but penetrating cross off the left by Anthony and a do-or-die dive by Searle. Unfortunately, he didn't quite make his connection.

And then came the Horseman incident that dominated all after-match discussion on the way back to Wycombe. M.W.

WEALDSTONE — A. Williams; B. Williams, G. Hand; D. Bullock, M. Smith, H. Moxon; J. Draper (sub. B. Bremer), D. Montague, D. Swain, J. Ritchie, L. Peddie.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS — J. Maskell; I. Rundle, C. Gale; P. Sudaby, J. Delaney, J. Lailey; G. Anthony, B. Baker, K. Searle, T. Horseman, J. Hutchinson. Sub.: K. Blunt (not used).

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